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Kleinjans, Everett and Edith Oral History Interview: Old China Hands Oral History Project

Julie Van Wyk

Oral History Interview
Interviewee: Dr. Everett (EK) and Mrs. Edith (Eek) Kleinjans
Interviewer: Julie Van Wyk (JVW)
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JVW: Can you tell me briefly what made you decide to become a missionary to China?

EK: For myself, it goes back to World War II experiences where several things came together. Number one, I got into the army and they put me into the Army Specialized Training Program and, very briefly, instead of sending me off with my major in mathematics and physics, they sent me to Stanford because I knew Dutch. They taught me Dutch and Malay as languages and all about Indonesia as a specialty, but I also learned about the rest of that part of the world…China, Japan, India. We studied geo-politics and the rest of this kind of thing, and I found that somehow China intrigued me. The novels of Lin Yutang, *A Leaf in a Storm*, *Moment in Peking* were more powerful than Pearl Buck's books, *The Good Earth*, *Dragon Seed* and so forth. Then after that, after I graduated from the program, the army sent me to Europe, in the infantry. It was in the infantry where…I won't go into the whole business, but where you see people getting killed…where you see dead German soldiers and American soldiers, and they look exactly alike except they have different uniforms on. You start asking yourself, "What in the heck is going on?" and what's the answer? I could tell you personal stories which I won't mention, but basically the answer that came back is Christian love. And so, when I came out… In the meantime, Eek and I were engaged; I was at Stanford. I had a Christmas vacation and she and my mother came out to Omaha, Nebraska, going west, and I came east of Omaha, and we met for a week in Omaha. During that time, Eek asked me, "What are you going to do with all this education you're getting?" I said, "I don't know." She said, "Well, when you come back from the army, if you ever think of

going oversees as a missionary or whatever, I would be willing to go along with you on that." So that's sort of the way it _____. Then when I came back from the army, she was teaching in Wayne; we were married. I went to the University of Michigan, thinking I would do something in engineering or something and go abroad and help with the re_____ing of a place like China. We talked to a couple of missionaries about the possibility of teaching in the Shanghai American School; the Koeppes were the ones that we talked to, as I remember. Then I got a job teaching at Holland Christian High School. I was teaching mathematics and coaching basketball. One of the interesting things that happened is that one Sunday Eek said to me, "You know, we've often talked about going to China, but _____ to. Maybe some time when if Lumen Schaefer, who was then secretary of the board, comes to Chicago and visits my parents," because he used to stay there quite often, and her parents were in Chicago at that time. "We ought to go and talk to him." Well, the next day, I think it was Monday, *The Holland Evening Sentinel* had a picture of Lumen Schaefer saying he was going to speak at Western Theological Seminary. So we immediately called Gene Osterhaven and said, "Gene, can you get us an appointment with him?" So we got an appointment, had dinner with him at the Warm Friend Tavern where he was staying, and he said, "Tell me about yourselves." So, Eek told him about her background. She didn't have to say much because he knew Eek's parents. I told him about my experiences, about the war, about _____. He said, "You're just the kind of guy we need. I just came back from China. There's an opening to teach English at Talmage College. How'd you like to go?"

JVW: So then did you get any preparation for_____before you went, or did you just go immediately?

EK: The board, and Lumen Schaefer, wanted me to go to Columbia University and get a master's degree in education. One of our advisors, especially Eek's advisor, was Dr. Clarence De Graaf at Hope College, and he was the one that actually got me the job teaching math at Holland Christian High School. He was on their board; in fact, I taught his son...I had his son in Algebra. He said, "There's a course at the University of Michigan, on teaching English as a second language." He said, "You really ought to get that before you go." So I went to Michigan for that summer…it was the summer of 1947…and I took one course on teaching and learning English as a second language. Then I took a course on the history of education and the philosophy of education. I guess it was the history and philosophy and psychology…I've forgotten, but it served to prepare myself to go on to Columbia. When I got in this course of English as a second language, two things happened. One, I found it fascinating. Two, I found I didn't know anything about it. We were talking about _____, terminal contours, and all this kind of thing. One of the women there, who was an assistant in the course, said, "Why don't you talk to Frieze and maybe you can stay here and get your master's in linguistics, rather than going to Columbia and getting that education. So I talked to Frieze. He asked me my background and I told him, and he said, "I'll write you a letter of recommendation to get you into the graduate program here." So I immediately wrote the board and said how about getting my degree in linguistics rather than going to Columbia. They immediately wrote back and said, "We think that's an excellent idea." So we stayed at Michigan, where I got my master's in linguistics with an emphasis on teaching English as a second language. At the same time we studied Chinese while we were there.

JVW: So you were both studying Chinese?

EK: We both studied Chinese.

JVW: Did you study Mandarin or Amoy?

EK: Mandarin; there was no Amoy. One of the papers we did for a course on linguistics…did we do a paper…remember we asked Dr. Hofstra's daughter to…since she…?

Eek: He was a resident, Amoy informant _____.

EK: _____. We were working with Dr. Kenneth Pike at the time, and she came in as the informant. She was studying medicine at the University of Michigan at that time.

Eek: _____ minister's house, growing up with missionaries _____.

EK: I think going back even farther she was saying that. I can remember being at her house. I used to hitchhike down to Chicago when we were dating each other in college. I was there for a weekend or something…I've forgotten what it was…but I do remember that her dad drove us back up into Michigan and that John Van Ess rode along. John Van Ess and her dad were in the front seat…she and I were in the back seat…and John Van Ess was telling us stories about Arabia. Fascinating! Absolutely fascinating stories and it began to make the Christian faith as I knew it over here in Zeeland, Michigan, come alive. I think that was certainly part of the influence. I remember another idea that came into my head was when I was playing basketball at Hope. It was after one of the games…I've forgotten which game it was, but…I was still in the shower, standing there stark naked, _____ myself, and in came fella. He said, "My name is Ray Drucker." I said, "Oh, your dad baptized me." His dad was Reverend Drucker who was in the Third Christian Reformed Church in Zeeland, and Ray knew my dad as a kid. Ray

was working in Kentucky at that time, and he said, "We need somebody like you in Kentucky. Why don't you come down and work with us in that…"

JVW: He was working in the mission?

EK: Yes, he was working in the mission in Kentucky. I thought, holy smokes, I'd never thought of anything like that. I mean, you don't major in mathematics and physics to go to Kentucky, you know? Anyway, that was another one of those little things that pops in my head as just a germ or the seed of an idea.

JVW: Back to the language training, you said you studied Mandarin. Were classes taught in Mandarin at Talmage College or did you teach in English?

EK: I used English basically, but I would use Mandarin…and, of course, when we got there, we immediately studied Amoy also. We had to know the Amoy language to get be able to get across from _____ to Amoy Island or to bargain for prices on the streets. So we had to pick it up right away. We learned both, and I would basically use English as much as possible except if…what should I say…if discipline broke down or something like this, then I'd try my Chinese to get them back. The faculty meetings were carried on basically in Amoy with some Mandarin.

JVW: Were you teaching at the time you got to China, or did they set aside a year or a specific amount of time for language study?

EK: We were basically in language study on the island of _____. During that time, I also taught English at _____, but outside of that we were basically a language study. And then, of course, what happened was we got there right after the turn of the year, in 1949, and the communists were already moving. In fact, when we stopped at Guam, right after that, there was a news broadcast saying that the American embassy had

asked Americans to leave China. In fact, it could go back one even one step further… We were in New Orleans, taking a boat that went around through the Panama Canal up to Hawaii, down to Guam and then Hong Kong, six and a half weeks. And at that time, the popular song was, *I'd like to Get You on a Slow Boat to China*. (laughs) Anyway, going all the way back there, our boat went from New Orleans to Houston, where the boat picked up 39 army tanks to take to China _____. In Houston, one of the Catholic priests…there were nine Catholic priests, Eek and I, and our son Brain on that boat as passengers. One of the Catholic priests was a bishop. He left us in Houston, got on a plane, flew back to China, since he was in North China and the area for which he was responsible was already being taken over by the communists. So, I don't know how normal and natural our stay in China was, because we got there in January of '49. By that summer, we had to make up our minds, were we going to stay or were we going to leave. We stayed and at the end of that summer we went up to Changchow, lived with the Poppemas for a couple weeks. She was seven months pregnant at that time. Then we moved into a Chinese house that we fixed up.

JVW: This was outside the mission compound _____?

EK: That's right. We moved into that house, had a housewarming party on her birthday, which was a birthday party and kind of a housewarming party, and the people all said, "Time to go home because the communists are outside the city." And that night we were liberated. I'm sorry, I'm doing all the talking.

Eek: That's all right.

JVW: If you were kind of in contact with the communists before you actually arrived in China, to a certain extent, knowing they were coming down _____. Did you find that when

you got to China, you had different views about the communists and nationalists than the older missionaries who were there?

EK: I don't know. We didn't talk a great deal about communism when we were there. At least I don't remember many conversations.

Eek: Not before they came.

EK: Not before they came, no.

Eek: I don't know, I think the older people saw it as just another _____. _____ I think that what we saw there, the nationalists, was kind of depressing, because all those soldiers were just quartered in the town. _____. It was a very run-down place. People had mixed feelings _____.

EK: An army and retreat is not the best social situation in the world, and that's the China that we saw.

Eek: I think the thing I was struck by then was that there didn't appear to be any government. Like here in United States, we see government every time we turn around. When we buy a postage stamp, you stop at a stoplight, pay tax on a purchase. We had some things stolen, but you don't report that to the police because that won't accomplish anything. Somebody knew the kingpin. We got some of our things back later. _____ on the staff of Talmage College, too…went back to look at some property he had _____ and disappeared. I think that was not reported to the police to this day. _____

JVW: Do you know if the people in town were really disillusioned by the nationalists or the lack of government? Or did they feel it was inevitable, that's the way things had been, kind of confused for so long?

EK: I think the story of the communists were basically interested in land reform, and this kind of thing. I hadn't gotten into this thinking of the people that we worked with. You have to remember that when we say we worked with them and so on, we worked with the people who could speak English. As soon as we got into philosophical or political discussions, our language was not adequate to do this in Chinese. It wasn't until after the communists came that they insisted on using Mandarin. My Mandarin, I would say, improved tremendously, so that by the time we left China and we were in Canton, I was…I guess you could use the verb grilled, by the Chinese police for about three hours. I could handle it. But that period, that nine months before the communists came, our language was still quite inadequate to really get a feel of what…when you say "the people"…were thinking about. The few people that we talked to, who were the intelligent people, mainly Christians.

JVW: Were these the other teachers at Talmage College?

EK: Talmage or _____ Tech or something like this. I don't think they looked with a great deal of fear at the communists coming. This is my impression.

Eek: Yeah, I would say that things were in such a state that many people kind of thought that anything would have to better than this…some change, any change.

JVW: Tell me something about Talmage College. What you taught, what kind of courses are offered…

EK: Well, the courses that were offered there were the normal courses in any Chinese high school. I taught English…and I've forgotten how many classes I had…I had quite a few of them, I know. Then when the communists came, soon after they came, they outlawed English as being the language of Imperialism, and therefore I didn't have a job, in a sense. The athletic director, coach, was chosen by the faculty to go off to Foochow to study communism, because one member of faculty had to go to the provincial capital to get the communist teachings and bring them back so that the rest of the faculty had them, and they chose the athletic director. And at a faculty meeting, the question came up, who was going then take care of athletics? And the principal of the school, whom we had met in the United States…he had studied at Columbia and then came back just about several half years before we got back there. He said, "Well, don't you know athletics?" I said, "Yes, I do." "Would you care to do the athletics?" I said, "I'd be happy to." So, at first, I didn't teach much English but I taught a lot of athletics. I taught basketball, volleyball, and I attempted to teach baseball…something that the Chinese didn't know. I don't know how complex the game was until I began to teach it. What it did, in a way, was get me very close to students. Of course it was there that I had to know my Chinese; they didn't know English. But I could use my Chinese then on the athletic field. At that time, I was a little quite a bit younger, of course, than I am now, and I played some basketball with them and got along very well. But later on, English came back in and before we left…

JVW: Was this still under the Communists?

EK: This was still under the Communists. Before we left, I was teaching quite a bit of English, so it came back in again.

Eek: _____ they used to come to our house, a group of kids.

EK: There were about five kids that came over for English conversation and English class…I did that also.

JVW: Did that continue under the communists without their feeling like they were being watched?

EK: Well, the interesting thing was that, when we left, I was very pleased. We were asked to come to the school on the day we were going to leave Changchow, and here the whole school was sitting in that great big auditorium and we came in. Somebody gave the order and everybody stood up. We were on the stage, and they all bowed to us. Then the president of the student council got up and made some very flattering statements about us. We learned that these five kids that were in my English class were the five communist youth leaders. (laughs) So, I guess it was alright. They are people just like the rest of us, you know, really. Just because they're communists doesn't mean that they have _____ or that they are bad people or anything else.

JVW: I have read some of the other interviews _____ that they lost a lot of _____ after the communists came because people were afraid of associating with them, and that's what I was wondering about with your students.

Eek: It depends. Some people said, "I don't care who sees me walking down the street _____," and other people would, you know, if they saw a communist soldier coming would just quietly move away. I think we got to the point where we began _____.

JVW: People at Talmage College, were they mostly students from right in that Changchow area? Or did people come far…?

EK: No, they were basically that area.

JVW: Was it a certain class of people or status in Chinese that attended this school?

EK: I don't know enough about that. I didn't get their background. My feeling is that there was quite a wide variety. My impression of that part of the country…and we weren't far inland, we were only 45 miles inland...but there is no question of the tremendous difference between…Amoy as a port and Changchow as not a port. The language is different. Amoy was _____. Where we were staying _____. The language changed. The town of Changchow was rundown. The walls of the city were crumbling. You could walk around and see all kinds of houses that were in disrepair. It was a place where the people actually did bring the chickens and pigs in the house at night when they went to bed. The road running in front of Talmage College…when you read the literature put out by the Reformed Church written by some missionary there, it was: Talmage College is located on the main road, running west into the province of Fukien. It was a little dirt road. It was the main highway…well, shucks, it was a little dirt road. I mean, two cars could pass but…

Eek: It was a country town.

EK: When you think of poverty, when you think of middle class, when you think of these things, my impression was…at least at the stage in history that we saw…There were a few large houses around, and you could really _____ the rich people, but there were very few of these rich people. Most people were really quite, in our terms, unwealthy, but not poor. Although they're excellent farmers, industrious people, and all that kind of thing, but poverty is always is in relationship to _____. When you think poverty in the United States of course…

Eek: _____.

JVW: When you left China, were there any other Christian teachers from _____, Chinese teachers who left as well. Do you know any Chinese who felt the need to leave?

EK: Yes, one. _____, the fellow in Amoy that repaired our refrigerator, went down to Hong Kong. Along that line, let me say that… Before we left, we were given a dinner at one of the churches in Changchow. We went to the basement of the church and just before we ate, people looked around and nodded to each other and then closed the door. We, at least, got the impression that these were all people who knew each and trusted each other…and there was a lot distrust that went on…they didn't know who was who, and _____ and so on. It was a lovely meal and Chinese food is so good and all that kind of thing. But during that meal, I remember this one…they were talking about how long are the Communists going to be here. This one person said, six months. Put his hand out like that, turned it over. Six months and then it'll flip-flop; the other ones will come back. This can't go on. They talked about how the communists have gone in and cut down fruit trees. They talked about how the communists come in and they had had this set of meetings. The people from the South, _____ had cots to lie on or something like that, but the people from the North didn't. Everybody didn't so no one could have cots; they all had to be equal. But as soon as they slept on the ground, they became sick. So then everybody had to have cots, but they didn't have enough, so they went around and took down doors…these great big doors that open up into the gardens of the houses and so on, so everyone could lie off the ground. They told a lot of stories like this. These people are just foolish. They don't know anything about

South China, they don't know who we are, they don't know etcetera, etcetera, they can't last long. That was one of the impressions.

JVW: What was the _____, you said you had a party, everyone went home.

Eek: _____. It went very quickly in Changchow. Amoy was under siege for a couple weeks.

EK: Having been a soldier and knowing something about rifles and guns and this and that, I told her, "Let's go to bed." Our bedroom was on a second floor. I said, "If they're on the ground and shoot up, the bullets will come up, but bullets will not go through a mattress." A bullet will go through a huge tree before it would go through a mattress. So I said, "Let's go to bed," and we did…

Eek: The next day _____ found that some of the people _____, huddled in a stairwell all night. We slept.

EK: We slept, basically. Occasionally we could hear the _____. I would say that when I listened, I recognized some of that shooting because it was the same kind of shots that I was in charge of when I was an American soldier in Europe. A couple weeks after they came, I walked down to the campus of Talmage College, and here were the Chinese soldiers, practicing with their guns. They lived next door to Talmage College because next to Talmage College was a big temple and they lived at the temple. They were practicing on our campus. Well, there were the heavy machine guns, exactly the same kind that I worked with when I was an American soldier. All their equipment was American equipment…it gave you kind of a funny feeling.

JVW: Did you notice a lot of difference between the morale of the _____, between the nationalists and the communists _____?

Eek: When we first came into town and our cook came to us, they said they wanted to borrow a bucket. I said we'd let them have one of those wooden buckets. No, they wanted the galvanized one which we had bought in the United States and taken to China. I said, well, okay, and let it go. I never planned to see that bucket again. Then a number of weeks later, we got up one morning and we saw the troops filing out of town and I said to Ek, well, there goes our bucket. We went downstairs for breakfast, and the cook came in and said they brought the bucket back.

EK: Even _____ soldiers wouldn't have done that in Germany, I'm sure. But also, the other thing, she mentioned earlier that one of the impressions we had was that we were not close to government. Once the communists came in, our bikes had to be registered, we had to be registered…

Eek: We had to carry a pad, we couldn't leave town overnight without…well, we didn't even leave town for nine months until we went back to Amoy.

JVW: Did you ever try for permission to leave town? Or was it just too much hassle?

EK: No, we didn't hassle it.

Eek: That applied not only to us, but it applied also to the Chinese. _____ kept careful tabs on everybody.

EK: We had good Christian students that we brought in to the primaries and do evangelistic work, and they weren't permitted to _____ but they could go out and _____, propagandize for the communists.

Eek: So they had them go out and they would play all communist songs, and when they came back at the end of the day, they marched up the street playing Abide with Me. (laughter)

EK: We had brought all those band instruments in with us. We had taken boxes, huge boxes. We brought in two pianos and a whole bunch of band instruments to help Talmage College _____ musical. They had this anti-American parade, and the house that we lived in was about two…well, there was a block between us and that main road that we were talking about, but there was nothing built between it. So the people told us, look, there's this anti-American demonstration going on, you better stay home. So we stayed home. Then we saw the Talmage College band marching along this main road going back to Talmage College and they were playing Abide with Me.

Eek: Yeah, there were interesting things…our cook had to go off every Saturday afternoon to practice for this spontaneous demonstration.

EK: One of the interesting things we've had, as I sit here and remember now. The nurses at the hospital across from Talmage College, they were going to have some kind of program, so I thought I'd teach them square dancing…this was after the communists came. The communists said no, that's _____ music, and you can't have it. So I sat down for almost two days with Mrs. Veenschoten, and she found some old time Chinese music. She said, alright, now tell me how this square dance goes, what the rhythm is that you need, and all this kind of thing so we sat there for about two days, going through all the motions of the square dance. She put it into old Chinese music so that we could make that shift. (laughs)

[End of side one]

Multiple people talking

EK: That was the time when we really decided to leave. Two things _____. One, I was asked to lead chapel at Talmage College…they had chapel there every Sunday

morning for the kids. So I worked with my Chinese teacher, who was not a Christian…he was from the north and spoke the Beijing___, like natives do. And so I wrote out the speech that I wanted, and he helped me. But I wasn't sure that he was using Christian terminology and some of these things. So I gave to one of the people at Talmage College and said, "Would you read this over and see if I've expressed myself properly?" The next day it came back and there were a lot of corrections, so I read them. This was in Chinese, of course, but…I don't want to say that. I said, "It doesn't sound to me that this and this are the same." He looks and says, "Well, they're not quite the same, no, but maybe good enough." I kept on reading, and at one point he said, "I'm sorry, but I can't help you correct your paper." I looked at him and I said, "You mean you can't or you don't want to?" Then he told me about his own position and what he was doing at the college and all the rest of this and how if he corrected my speech and I said what I wanted to say, this would put him in trouble.

JVW: Because of the Christian terminology?

EK: No, because what I did was say…in effect, because I remember the speech… "What's important, the spiritual or the material? And I used the analogy, I remember saying, "We don't have really good athletic facilities here at Talmage College, but I have now been teaching you athletics, I'm playing basketball with you, and it's wonderful because we have a great spirit. Now, even if we had a beautiful gymnasium with the finest equipment in the world, but if we didn't have the right spirit, you wouldn't have a good basketball. Life is like that. The spiritual is more important than the material, etcetera." Of course, this was taking a good poke right at communism, although I never mentioned communism in the speech. He said, "If you say that, somebody will be in trouble. And

the person that will be in trouble is the person that helped you make that speech." In my brash, brave, young, American way I said in effect, "This is the truth and I would be willing to speak the truth on the corner of any street, in any city, in any country in the world!" Then I went and talked with Reverend Koeppe. I told him what the situation was, and I said, "I have to speak the truth," and this and that. And I remember him at one point saying, something to the effect, "Maybe it's better to get 30% of your message across without trouble than to get 100% of your message across with trouble." "But," I said, "that's compromising the Gospel. How can you do that?" He said, "Yes, but there's more to it because the Gospel is not just what you say, it's also what you're living and it's also what happens to people." I would say that that was one of the greatest learning experiences of my life, because ultimately I compromised my speech and I said, "Who am I who can jump on a boat and go back to my safe country, talk in such a way that I get people who have to stay here, in trouble?"

Eek: You can be very righteous when you're very young.

EK: Oh yeah, I was righteous. (laughs) I was right, right as the dickens! But that was, of course, about the same time that the Korean War broke out. When the Korean War broke out, attitudes became very changed. I came home one day, our cook's wife, _____, came to me and called me aside and said, "You must take your wife and your two babies home now. It's getting bad." So then we thought it's time to go.

Eek: Well, that was in June…however, we didn't leave until _____, finally October 10 we crossed the border into Hong Kong.

JVW: Your decision? It wasn't the decision of the consulate or the board?

EK: No. In fact, we called…as I remember, I called John Muilenberg in Changchow…I mean, he was in Amoy and I called him from Changchow. He was about the same age, and I said, "John, this is what I'm thinking." He said, "Gosh, I'm thinking the same thing." I went and talked to Henry Poppen, and Poppen was so depressed. "What's going to become of the mission? What's going to become of all the work that we've done here with you young fellows leaving?" We said, "Well, is there any choice?" I can remember him saying, "Didn't God call you to China?" And I sat there, and I said, "Yeah, I think he did. But somehow I have the feeling that he's calling me home now." He was really despondent at that point. But we felt we had given it a try, and looking back now, when you have 20/20 hindsight, it was the right decision because we got our kids out and then the situation did deteriorate much more after we left.

Eek: I would say _____, and then about three months and I think everyone else did five _____. We had sort of a trying time…first getting permission to leave, and then actually the overland trip. But we were never in any real physical danger, I don't think. But some of those who came a few months later…

EK: On the way out we were put under house arrest one time in a Buddhist temple when they didn't accept our passes. There were eleven of us…there was Douglas Lake and his two kids, there was that English missionary, single lady, I've forgotten what her name was. And then there was Mrs. Oppen and her son, and then the four of us.

Eek: Where was Mrs. Lake?

EK: She was there…I said the Lakes and their two daughters, that's four, and she was five and then there were six… eleven of us in all that were on our way out. I became the spokesman for the group because I could speak Mandarin. And then we were put up

because Douglas Lake had an old Brownie camera and a 1927 National Geographic map, and every time we crossed a river, every time we stopped, the police would examine it. The police found his camera and the map and, of course, only spies carried cameras and maps. We were put under house arrest because we were spies. Then we showed them our passes to get out, and they wouldn't accept our passes because now we were in _____ province, and they had to send all the way back to Foochow to make sure that these passes were legitimate before we could go on. So, it became kind of a trying experience. Our son Dave, second son, was, what, ten months old at the time, eleven months, something like that, and she was still nursing. It was the best food that we could get him on our way out. You don't buy pablum at a little town on the way that you're going through.

JVW: Let's work with something that is very general for a second. In retrospect, what kind of effect do you think mission work and the missionaries present had on China?

EK: In one sense, I'd say very profound, but not in the way that the church or the missionaries thought. In a sense, I think we can say…and I recognize that I'm speaking in broad generalities, because that's what you asked me to do. The Chinese have many, what I would call, superstitions or animistic approaches to life. The missionaries came in and set up schools all over the place. In the schools, they taught modern science, and with modern science they destroyed a lot of these animistic beliefs, the superstitions, and all of that. So, then in the minds of the Chinese, "What was God? Who was God? Science, that's what destroyed our…that's more powerful than our animistic beliefs." But they didn't accept Christianity. We were in a part of the country where Christianity took root

better than almost any other place in China. It was the strongest part of the United Church of China, at least according to…

Eek: There were a lot of Christian churches, and they were full on Sunday and the people who came were quite gung ho. I don't know, I had the impression looking back, that…well, a couple things. One is health care, medicine, those things, schooling… I think what the Christians did…I don't know if they first introduced, but at least they did introduce these things which then were later taken over by the government, but I think there was a certain amount of general enlightenment that was quite important. I remember being stressed though after the communists came and seeing how they were able to enforce certain behaviors simply because they had troops behind them. They wanted to wipe out prostitution and filth and meanness and nastiness and all these things. In reflecting at that time that these were the kinds of things missionaries had been trying to persuade people to for something like a hundred years. Well the communists did it by force, and it was a lot faster. (laughs)

EK: Again, what you're saying is true. That's basically what I'm saying also is that, the social impact, I think, was quite large…the religious impact was not as a large. When you think of less than one half of one percent of the population being Christian…when you think of today, for example in Korea, 20% of the population is Christian. During the 1950ss and 60ss, the Korean church was the fastest growing Christian community in the world. And now they have somewhere between 20-25% of the people who are Christian. In China, that didn't happen, _____ more than it's happening in Japan. You see, it's very difficult…they probably just jump to Japan then. When, in front of the Tokyo station…I don't know if you ever saw it…there's a statue of human beings with arms

outstretched, looking up to the heavens, and the name of that statue is Agape, which is the Christian word for love. It's Christian, outgoing, prevenient love. Or the one in the _____ library, it says above the door, "The truth shall make you free." That is not a quotation from the Buddhist _____. Now, what is the impact on the culture, as over against measuring it by the number of Christians who are church members, is very difficult to tell, from the religious point of view. From the social point of view, I think there is a great deal of impact.

Eek: Of course, we know very little about what happened to the church after we left. I have no idea whether there is still a Christian community functioning or not.

JVW: Okay, that's the extent of my questions. Do you want to add anything?

EK: I would say, one, probably last comment, we talked a bit about it before the end of yours started, when I said that behavior is where the Christian faith is _____. Partly I learned this from the communists in China, because where they challenged the Chinese Christians…and partly me as I talked to them…I remember one time this one person said to me, "You're a Christian," and I said "Yes." "That means you believe God created the world." "Yes." "How will that kind of faith help the farmer out there grow more rice?" And you stand there with your mouth full of teeth, you see, and what you come down to is to say, if you're faith does not have some kind of working out, some kind of effect in your life today, none of it is relevant for the day. And the challenge of the communists as they came into China was, what is the relevance of the Christian faith to everyday life, not just individual, but social? And I think this is still a great challenge.

Eek: _____ are interested in having it good after you die, and you see the Christians only interested in having things better now, see us.

EK: See us. (laughs)

JVW: Okay, thanks very much.

EK: Thank you.

[End of interview]